

NEW BOOKS & MEDIA

The Science of Baseball

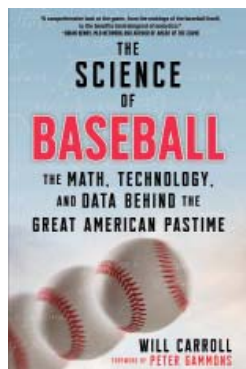
The Math, Technology, and Data behind the Great American Pastime

Will Carroll

Skyhorse, 2022. \$14.99 (paper)

Just in time for opening day comes *The Science of Baseball* by Will Carroll, a sportswriter who specializes in covering injuries. The book explores such topics as the science behind baseball equipment like bats and balls, the effects of sticky substances on thrown balls (see “The physics of baseball’s sticky situation,” *PHYSICS TODAY* online, 8 July 2021), and the launch angle and bat speed hitters should aim for if they want to knock a pitch out of the park. Carroll also looks to the future and predicts that climate change will likely force manufacturers to construct bats from “engineered woods” that are made with glue-lamination techniques. His joy for the sport’s quirks is infectious: One delightful factoid he relates is that all official baseballs are “rubbed up” with something called Lena Blackburne Baseball Rubbing Mud, which the seller procures from an unknown location in New Jersey.

—RD



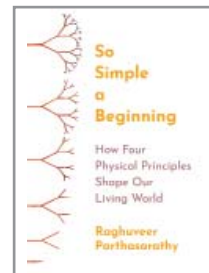
So Simple a Beginning

How Four Physical Principles Shape Our Living World

Raghuveer

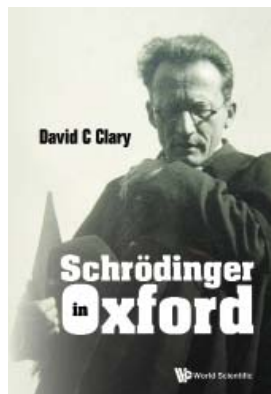
Parthasarathy

Princeton U. Press, 2022. \$35.00



In this popular-science book, the physicist Raghuveer Parthasarathy endeavors to reveal the wonder of biophysics to lay readers. To tackle that complex subject, Parthasarathy focuses on four fundamental concepts: self-assembly, regulatory circuits, predictable randomness, and scaling. Through discussions of biological components such as DNA, cells, and tissues, he shows how the instructions for building with them and the circuitry required to control their activity are encoded into their physical characteristics; how their random physical processes are predictable; and how their sizes and shapes are determined by gravity and other forces. Dozens of original watercolors and drawings by the author illustrate the nontechnical text.

—CC



Schrödinger in Oxford

David C. Clary

World Scientific, 2022. \$98.00

Authored by the physical chemist David C. Clary, this book focuses primarily on Erwin Schrödinger’s time at the University of Oxford from 1933 to 1936 and in 1938—after he was twice forced to emigrate from the European continent. Using quotations from correspondence between Schrödinger and other émigré scientists like Max Born, Albert Einstein, and Francis Simon, Clary outlines well the travails of the refugee scholar. Because his appointments at Oxford were temporary, Schrödinger was constantly looking for a permanent position, which meant that

he was not very scientifically productive while there. Nevertheless, he still managed to publish the famous 1935 paper outlining the thought experiment that became known as Schrödinger’s cat. Unfortunately, Clary decided not to discuss the physicist’s personal life in the book, which was a major omission: Schrödinger was a misogynist and a serial womanizer who often preyed on underage women.

—RD

LABOCINE

Labocine

www.labocine.com

\$30.00/year

Focusing on the so-called Science New Wave, Labocine is a streaming platform that showcases the latest in science-themed cinema—including both fiction and nonfiction, animations, data visualizations, and even raw lab footage. In addition to a database of more than 3000 science films, the site features monthly issues of curated films, in-depth articles about the films’ subject matter and creators, live-streamed events, and a networking hub. Although some content is freely available, access to certain parts, such as the monthly video issues and film database, requires a subscription. Aimed at scientists, artists, and educators, Labocine promotes itself as a forum for science-based content that blends disciplines and cultures, celebrates diversity, and challenges stereotypes.

—CC 

Point of Discovery

Marc Airhart, host

University of Texas at Austin, 2015–

Produced by the University of Texas at Austin’s College of Natural Sciences, this podcast highlights scientists and research at the institution. Episodes are typically the length of an NPR segment—namely, 10–15 minutes—and they focus on topics as varied as a pandemic affecting frogs and the way in which animals socially distance when sick. A two-part series from earlier this year focused on the life and work of the legendary theoretical physicist Steven Weinberg, who taught at UT Austin from 1982 until his death in 2021. Featuring interviews with friends and colleagues like Willy Fischler and Katherine Freese as well as excerpts from interviews Weinberg gave during his lifetime, the series provides an excellent overview of both his landmark contributions to the standard model and his philosophical perspective on physics.

—RD

